United Nations A/ES-10/512–S/2011/113

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
4 March 2011

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 4 March 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, remains extremely tense and volatile as a result of the repressive, illegal measures that continue to be carried out by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people. This critical situation has been further aggravated by the recent failure of the Security Council to adopt a resolution regarding the illegal Israeli settlement campaign, which continues to be aggressively pursued in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and which continues to inflame sensitivities, deepen mistrust, endanger the viability of the two-State solution, and obstruct the resumption of the peace process.

We are thus compelled to bring to your attention some of the serious developments in the recent period, and to underscore once again the need for urgent action by the international community, in line with international law and responsibilities, to address the occupying Power's egregious violations and to once and for all take the necessary measures to bring an end to these violations and to act in unison and with urgency to advance the realization of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

In this regard, we wish to place on record our total rejection of and grave concern regarding increasingly hostile measures adopted by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Ignoring the unanimous calls from around the world for respect for its legal obligations and to display a genuine commitment to peace, the Israeli Government continues to act in abject disregard and in contravention of its legal obligations as an occupying Power towards the Palestinian people. Such actions exacerbate and further destabilize the fragile situation on the ground, taking us farther away from the prospects for realization of peace and security between the two peoples, in the Middle East region and beyond.

Please recycle

In the Gaza Strip, while the Palestinian civilian population continues to suffer from the devastation wrought by Israel's brutal military aggression two years ago and from the nearly four-year imposition of its illegal and punitive siege, Israel announced on Wednesday, 2 March 2011, yet an additional measure which will surely compound the suffering of the population. We refer here to the occupying Power's closure of the Karni commercial crossing, the third of the four Gaza commercial crossings closed by Israel since 2007. While the Karni crossing had the limited capacity to service up to 1,000 trucks per day, which have not even been permitted by the occupying Power under the blockade regime, Israel will now divert all goods destined to the besieged Gaza Strip through the smaller and more poorly equipped Kerem Shalom crossing.

Such a punitive measure directly contradicts Israel's clear obligation to end its illegal siege of Gaza without delay in accordance with international humanitarian law and with the repeated calls from the entire international community in this regard. Additionally, humanitarian and aid agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, forecast that this closure will result in a 20 per cent increase in the cost of aid delivery in Gaza. Such a steep rise in costs will needlessly add to the financial burden of international aid organizations already struggling to cope with the increasing needs of the civilian population in Gaza, whose hardship continues to intensify because of Israel's illegal siege and policies.

At the same time, we must convey our grave alarm and complete rejection of the continued illegal Israeli campaign of demolishing Palestinian homes to make way for even more illegal settlement construction and expansion, especially in Occupied East Jerusalem. The latest report by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat indicates an unprecedented increase in Israeli demolition of Palestinian homes, whereby 96 Palestinian-owned structures in the Occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem have been demolished since the beginning of the year, displacing at least 171 people, including children and elderly persons. Clearly, this campaign of destruction is a continuation of the occupying Power's illegal policy of forcible expulsion and illegal colonization in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, where just last Wednesday, 23 February 2011, the occupying authorities in East Jerusalem approved the construction of 14 new illegal settlement units in the Holy City.

Equally alarming is the increase in terrorist attacks and threats by Israeli settlers against Palestinians and their property. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that Israeli settler violence is behind the uprooting of 700 olive trees in the past two months alone. Armed Israeli settlers also continue to commit arson attacks, assault children and farmers and destroy Palestinian property on a daily basis, spreading fear and destruction across the Occupied Palestinian Territory. As in the past, these acts of terrorism continue with impunity, enjoying the active protection and tacit approval of the occupying forces.

At a time when the international community is united in advocating for and protecting the universal rights of peoples for justice, democracy and freedom in the Middle East, it is unacceptable and indeed morally objectionable to see this unity undermined and even derailed in relation to the international position and action regarding the Palestinian people and their long and difficult struggle for the realization of their inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination and

freedom. The time is ripe to bolster the credibility and unity of purpose and commitment to fundamental ideals and principles of the international community. The United Nations, in particular the Security Council, should act proactively and immediately to stop these Israeli aggressions once and for all. The double standard regarding protection of civilians must be ceased; the Palestinian people have for years been in dire need of protection from the brute force and oppression imposed upon them by the occupying Power and this need should be recognized, particularly in view of the critical circumstances prevailing in the region.

The time for serious action by the international community, including by the Quartet, is now, and it is this action that will provide us with a genuine opportunity to achieve our collective objective of securing a peaceful settlement in accordance with the internationally supported two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 borders and within a defined time frame, bearing in mind the globally endorsed target date of September 2011. Now is the time to push forward with the determination to bring an end to the Israeli military occupation, the achievement of the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just solution for all other aspects of the question of Palestine, including the plight of the refugees, and to thus allow Palestine and Israel to live side by side in peace and security. At this most critical and decisive juncture, the international community should not turn away from this challenge or its responsibilities. Indeed, it is our firm conviction that only our collective efforts, in line with our moral and legal obligations, will make such peace and security a reality for our peoples, for the region and the international community as a whole.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 384 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 18 February 2011 (A/ES-10/511-S/2011/80) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations